

The Hottentot women love to paint dark, fantastic masks on their faces. 302
Black or red powder is rubbed with a leather cloth on the face which has 306
been previously greased. They get black powder from the knotty parts of 324
the lower trunk of a Pelargonium, which are thoroughly roasted and then
dusty, crumbly, dark mass can be easily knocked off their bark. Those
who prefer red make a powder called "igub" from the dry heartwood of a
giraffe acacia. When the face is all powdered, the painted parts of the
face are sharply outlined with a damp tip of a cloth in front of a mirror.
Here and there the face is wiped clean, until the face is partly covered
as with a Mardi gras mask, out of which sometimes only the eyes and
nostrils peer or perhaps the side parts of the forehead and the cheeks show,
according to the taste of the artist.

4. Care of the Hair

Care of the hair is usually completely neglected. Along the coast, 302
the Hottentot sometimes washes his head with the yokes of raw penguin
eggs in order [211] to encourage the growth of hair. I never saw anyone
with his hair cut. An old-fashioned Hottentot used to brush his hair with
the rough, dried mucous membrane of a cow's tongue.

A jackal's tail or a silver jackal's tail corresponds to our handkerchief 820
or they use a thick bushy tail of the Otocyon megalotis Desmar., or at times 829
a bundle of ostrich feathers; "na-bes or gams is the name of this handker-
chief.

The coastal Hottentots have more fleas and the inhabitants of the more [34]
elevated parts of the country have more lice.

F. Medicine

The medicine of the Hottentots has not been aided at all by the ex- 826 ●
cellent anatomical knowledge which each person acquires in his childhood 753
from cutting up slaughtered cattle and wild game. They have no or only
isolated and confused ideas about the functions of the individual parts of the
body and if there is no externally evident reason for the trouble in the sick
body, they do not use their anatomical knowledge.

Thus they attribute various pains in the upper leg or even in the lower 757
leg to a falling of the intestines. Massaging in the direction towards the 757
abdomen is supposed to press the displaced intestines back. But first the sick

While doing this they can feel the uterus and determine each time how much it has been enlarged. 843

Pregnant women sometimes tie a leather band, do-mrob, around their body to prevent the abdomen from drooping. [212]

They do not say anything themselves definite about the sex of the expected child. They suspect a boy when the opening of the uterus is broad.

The child is not considered living until it is seven months along. They are well oriented about the position of the child in the uterus. They distinguish precisely whether the back of the child is turned towards that of the mother, and correspondingly, the forehead of the child is facing the abdominal wall of the mother. One can therefore say that they distinguish readily the first and second head position (each in its most customary sub-type). They know that these positions are the only normal ones. [761]

It can be assumed from the above that they recognize abnormal positions but they do not correct them either before or during birth. Inserting the hand into the vagina to examine it is unknown. [244]

The pregnant woman does not have to follow a special diet. They are only careful to avoid constipation because that makes delivery more difficult and hinders the lochia from discharging. [262]

Precautionary rules of another kind are linked with the deeply rooted belief in the "mistakes" of pregnant women. The stories that the Hottentot women tell correspond in principle with those of the women of our race. As is characteristic for a pastoral people a pregnant woman who still honors the customs of her parents may not be present when an animal is slaughtered; otherwise her child would be born with a slit throat. The woman may not do anything on the mat house with her arms raised up high, in order to protect her child from being strangled by the umbilical cord.

Their ideas about the location of the embryo in the body are in remarkable contrast to their good anatomical knowledge [217] of animals. According to their belief, conception occurs in the bladder, //kxuru-s. A second bladder forms there in which the embryo is enclosed. The uterus is merely an appendage of the embryo, which disintegrates during the ejection of the water, taa/nu-b, the afterbirth and blood. It grows again during the next pregnancy. Because of this opinion they often have one word for the uterus and the afterbirth, //hās. More enlightened ones distinguish the two, calling the uterus //hās, "that which stays in the mother" and the afterbirth in our sense, phōs. They often explain 843 826

bladder difficulties of pregnant women in this way: During the growth of the embryo there is a greater burden on the bladder and it is not up to this.

They reckon the time of delivery inexactly. Their count begins with the new moon following the first indications of pregnancy. Each new moon is noted with a notch on one of the poles of the hut. When they have cut nine notches, they prepare for the happy event. For example: a woman notices on January 25th, 1904 at the time of the first quarter of the moon that she is pregnant. On the day of the next new moon (February 16th) she makes the first notch and at the ninth new moon (October 9th) the last one. Now she awaits the child, 246 days after the first signs of pregnancy. The pregnancy calendar of a white woman would estimate the birth at the end of October.

b) Delivery. //ora-s, giving birth, ina-?es, being born; one also hears the word su/bu-s, relief, ha/s, getting. oa-s means calving of cows and, when said of a person, is scorned as a vulgar expression). I have seen women immediately before delivery with a staff of midwives in readiness. Once I saw six women squatting around in one hut scarcely 3 meters in width. Mixed in with the smoke of the sooty fire was the smoke of the coffee which they burned and of the pipes which steadily made the rounds. It was difficult to recognize the woman who was the cause of this gathering who lay on the floor in the background covered with skins. I was also able to visit women after they had given birth and find out about the details of the birth. But in spite of many personal connections with several families and their many relatives I was never able to be an eye-witness at a birth. Even when the pregnant woman expressly gave me permission to attend, [218] I would either hear about the event just after it had occurred, or if I had found out about it in time, permission had subsequently been withdrawn. Consideration for the woman in labor, which according to the prevailing opinion of the Hottentots does not even permit the presence of a male Hottentot, forced me to give in. I am therefore particularly indebted to my honored old friend, Frau v. B., who grew up among the Hottentots and has been active for decades in their huts as a midwife. She became very well acquainted with the birth practices of the Little Namaland Hottentots where they are still removed from cultural contacts. I have thoroughly tested the information that she gave me. My research in Great Namaland before and after she gave me this information makes me fully prepared to accept the responsibility for the following even without the personal guarantee of my authority.

They usually bother very little about the afterbirth. They do not care whether it comes out after one hour or days later. In one case the afterbirth still had not come out after 3 days, the woman had developed a fever and the umbilical cord, which was tied to a pole of the hut, had shriveled up to a dry rope. None of the women thought of interfering. A doctor who was travelling through removed the afterbirth.

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However, in other cases, medicine is given when the afterbirth does not appear. A resin comes out of the lower trunk of a bush called **ho-ras*, which becomes incruited with sand and dust and hardens into dirty lumps with a rough surface. This mass, **nunu-b*, (cf. Analysis in the Appendix) is crushed and brewed with hot water. This drink, especially when prepared strong, is also considered a good way to produce bleeding after birth, because they consider it fatal if it does not occur. Sometimes they try a favorite remedy, wrapping in skins, if the afterbirth still has not appeared on the third day. The tail end of a freshly removed goat skin that is still warm is pressed (the wet side towards the inside) on the woman's loins, drawn between her legs and spread out on her lower body.

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The afterbirth is buried in the ground.

[221] The nursing. Not much is done to the new citizen of the earth. He is not washed but wiped off with a skin, his whole body greased and wrapped in a skin after the umbilical cord has been wound in a circle. A salve made from fat and the powder of burned ostrich egg shells is always kept prepared for him. This is rubbed on the child's forehead, temples, and nose, and especially in his nostrils, to produce sneezing and thus expel mucus. The fontanelis are well greased because they believe that sicknesses enter there most readily.

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The newborn children of the pure Hottentots that I saw on the morning after birth had rosy, not fawn-colored skin. [Picture. A Nursing Topnaar Hottentot Woman, about 35 Years Old].

When the umbilical cord falls off, they rub in the wound a charred, dry, tindery powder which is prepared from the underground parts of *Oxalis caledonica* Son (called **ho/abe-s*). If the wound is inflamed, this mass is rubbed on mixed with fat.

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A widespread prejudice that seriously endangered the continuance of the Little Namaland Hottentot race, was that the mother's milk was not considered good for a child until the third day. Until then the newborn was given thinned goat's milk or cow's milk, unless another woman who was nursing a child, also nursed him. In other cases, when the poor

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The children try to enchant the chameleon with the words: ⁵³³ "!no-mtsi
!no-meba, x-ma !nu-rubas o-ab !" "Humpy old hunchback, child
of grandmother (*amas) Nurubasi!"

The baboon is honored by an especially exhaustive address. In a ⁵³³
deep wadi near the Orange River we heard the apes calling on the sur- ^{539x}
rounding cliffs. To the first one that became visible one of my
Hottentots called the following greeting which is widespread among
the people*:

*Cf. Bleek's translations of animal songs
from the manuscripts of the Grey Library
in Capetown.

"herē-tse, hē-retse!
/hu-mi /na-rutse,
//a-retse, //a-re /kxā-baītse,
!na-ohē gye //ga-nš //(!) /na-ox(c)n !
!nabu !nani-b ai gye mā-tse
/nabu a-maitse !
tsoa-ba gye gaš-s !"

For heaven's sake! You are gleaming with fat!*

*Actually something like: "Good God!"
from heere, the Dutch designation for
"lord" with the Hottentot vocative ending
of the masc. sing.

** The blades of the /hu-/mi/haru-s rush
(see p. 229) glisten like fat; a hide that
glitters like this is supposed to be the orna-
ment of the young baboon. The opposite
address which I also heard goes: "/no-ro
/kxo-nibetse"; /kxo-nibeb is an edible
underground bulb with a pale exterior.

Old Lefty! You are loaded down, you are loaded down with

*The use of the left hand is considered a
sign of dexterity.

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ART AND KNOWLEDGE

The early writers

164 speak of sore breasts, ophthalmias, and umbilical hernias as the common
 177 diseases, and coughs appear to have been frequent. After the advent
 of the white man, smallpox, measles and less cleanly diseases swept
 the country like plagues. An epidemic of smallpox in 1713 totally
 wiped out many of the Cape Hottentot groups, and greatly weakened
 the numerical strength and organization of others; a similar out-
 break in 1755 again decimated them, and to add to their woes leprosy
 attacked them; while in 1864 large numbers of Naman died from
 smallpox. At the present time, syphilis, another infection due to the
 white man, is widespread among them; tuberculosis, fevers, paralysis,
 ophthalmias, and chicken-pox are other common diseases, while during
 the cold season they catch severe colds, and, like all the other
 inhabitants of South Africa, they suffered heavily in the influenza
 pandemic of 1918.¹

753 All maladies, says Mrs. Hoernlé,² are divided by the Hottentots
 into two groups. First there is /aisena, "sickness," which they regard
 757 as due to some misplacement of the internal organs. According to
 [826] their notions of anatomy these organs have weird ways of wandering
 about the body. The treatment is massage, to restore each organ
 to its proper place; and in such massage the Hottentots are very
 highly skilled. The other group of diseases is called by the same name
 as death, /op, and in the treatment of these a great variety of herbs
 and roots is employed. Some of the herbs are considered so valuable
 that journeys are made from tribe to tribe to get them, although
 among the herbs found in any particular territory there are always
 some which may serve as substitutes. But however powerful the
 [759] remedy may be, if it is to be effective it must always be applied by
 someone who has had the disease and recovered. The most effective
 medicine will fail unless used by the right person.³

757 The principal diseases described to Mrs. Hoernlé as receiving
 this latter treatment are //autas, paralysis, //keis, "fever," /urub,
 784 varicose veins, and /nomis, lupus. Any man falling sick from any
 783 one of these or the other diseases called /op becomes /nau, and the
 treatment adopted to cure him is exactly similar to that described
 in the remarriage ceremony. The patient is secluded in a hut, and

¹ Laidler, "The Magic Medicine of the Hottentots," 433; Theal, *History of S. Africa before 1795*, ii, 431 ff., iii, 28, 36 ff.; Nolte, "Krankheiten ... der Nama" 630; Schinz, op. cit., 99; von François, op. cit., 215-16; Schultze, op. cit., 227; *Official Year Book of the Union*, No. 8; 983-6 *passim*.

² "Conception of Inau among the Hottentots," 77-9.

³ Cf. Schultze, op. cit., 213.

direction it will act as an emetic; should it be cut downwards it is transformed into a purgative. The Fleeer-boom, also, is used in this manner. Purgatives have a strange fascination for the Native, and for pains in the stomach or "fevers" they have been used to "work them out," that is, a tangible removal must always, they argue, be productive of good, for they firmly believe that whatever they suffer is caused by a tangible something. 759
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Rule of thumb methods prevailed in treatment, and the lore was handed down from father to son. In the beginning, man noticed that when he awakened in the morning he felt at his best, worked, or hunted better than later in the day; slackened and grew tired as the sun sank beneath the western horizon. Then he jumped to the conclusion that the rising of the sun was responsible for well-being, growth, and strength; and that the falling, setting sun was responsible for tiredness, failing strength and death. Therefore, the old tooth was thrown towards the rising sun, but a P/gai sup of witch doctor would throw it towards the setting sun to produce an evil effect. A fright was something tangible, and Nama women still by palpation diagnose the presence of a lump, a crystallised fright that has settled in the stomach. They state too, that the woman's "life place" resides on the right side, and that when she is sickly it moves about. 821
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From the details of this herbal lore it appears that the chief medical ailments treated by the Hottentots were pains in the stomach, and fevers, classed together as "fires," and distinguished only by locality, flatulences as an entity, diarrhoea, and among the accidental injuries, burns. Several specific complaints had specific treatment. Kolben described the treatment of headache by shaving the head with a sharp knife, leaving furrows between the mounds of hair. If the cause was supposed to be a "wind in the head," then massage was applied to the nape of the neck; and snuff of "dooba," which smells of garlic (asafoetida) was used. A case occurred during 1923 in Namaqualand of scarification of the temples as treatment for madness. Old writers mention this as the means whereby pains were let out. Infantile convulsions must have given the old women much work. A favourite prescription for this complaint was, and still is, Stink kruit leaves, the dried kidney of the D/siq jackal, and the sea bean, whatever that may be. Of these a powder is made which is worked into a linen band (in old days, a strip of hide) and fastened round the neck of the small patient. Small doses are then given internally mixed with mother's milk. The treatment is continued for one moon. 757
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Alternating periods of famine and feast upset many stomachs. When excess was recognised to be the cause of his discomfort, the Hottentot took the juice of aloes in warm broth. The leaves to-day are dried and chopped up as required.

278 gradually changes into white potassium nitrate. The black
 757 intermediate product is called in Afrikaanse swart boester,
 825 big black master, and the final product purified by air, bo
 meester, or grand big master, is potassium nitrate; it is the
 "big boss" of all medicines, dassiepis being given internally
 in decoction or infusion for all sorts of poisoning of whatever
 origin, and it is rubbed into scarified snake bites and scorpion
 stings. It is also used in such minor complaints as stiffness of
 the back and pains in the stomach.

278 Klipsweet is boiled, strained and given as a tea in insufficient
 757 flow of waters during parturition, and also for unhealthy mens-
 844 truation. In large doses it is used as an abortifacient, in
 847 smaller doses for pains in the back. To-day it is considered
 an ideal medicine for children.

•[826] Nasal mucus is an old Hottentot remedy, a handy one
 and probably the first ever used, for burns. The cast snake
 skin is burned and the powder used for the same complaint.
 The ease with which the snake leaves its old skin and its
 similarity to the thin cuticle covering a blister are probably the
 reason of its use.

Hyaena dung is precious, and in powder is given to children
 for convulsions. Among its modern uses is that of an insuffla-
 tive powder in cases of diphtheria. So strong is the faith in
 this remedy that no man, whatever be his colour, will see that
 white patch of faeces without pausing to pick it up.

757 Skins drawn warm off the living animal were used as an
 171 application for any severe pain. The use of such remedies has
 been world wide. It is mentioned by Miss Durham in "Man,"
 1913. 82. among some Balkan remedies, and the explanation for
 the use of warm sheep skin is similar to the Hottentot's
 explanation of his use of the porcupine's stomach—that the
 animal eats all sorts of herbs and that by this remedy the
 mixture thereof is enabled to soak into the patient.

752 C/ngama, a small greenish lizard about four inches long,
 278 is believed by the Native to be very poisonous. It is quick in
 movement and is called by the Nama, who kill it by thrown
 stones, the footed snake. The body is dried and powdered, and
 this is rubbed into scarifications over snake bites.

278 The Kanker beeste, or cancer beetle, is a small red and
 757 black flying insect which appears in decayed wood in spring.
 It is rubbed to pieces on warts—when the wart
 is expected to rot or to fly away. The more modern-minded
 Barend uses Euphorbia milk for this purpose, but goes a step
 further with the beetle, for he applies it to cancers.

PRESCRIPTIONS.

An old and much praised remedy is oubae C/namop, which
 consists of burned and powdered ostrich egg shells mixed with
 tail fat of sheep or goat. This is rubbed into the chest of